Go Outside from Within

BY JODY FISHER

STARTING AN IMPROVISED PHRASE from a chord tone produces a very traditional, "inside" sound. That's useful in many situations, but did you know you can use chord tones to generate rather radical ideas? Here's the concept: Compose short, interesting melodic ideas, and launch them from different chord tones. With this technique, you'll come up with phrases that are inside enough to sound intentional, but outside enough to intrigue listeners.

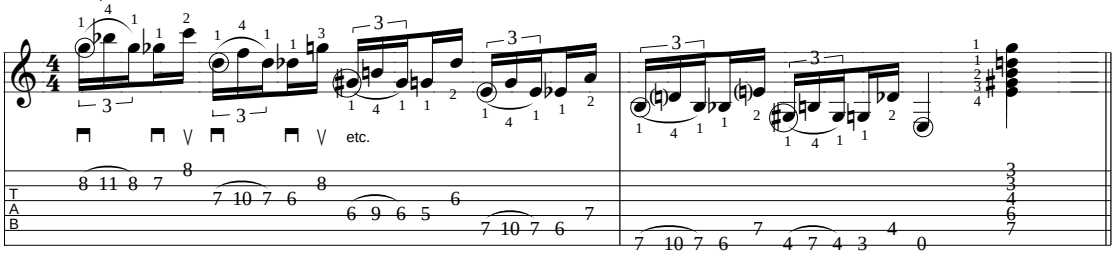
How it works. By beginning your phrase on a chord tone, you establish a connection with the harmony of the moment. The phrase's remaining notes carry you out of the chord—often entirely out of the key. You control the degree of tonal disintegration by the structure of your original melodic idea. The more chord tones you include, the more "inside" the sound. The more notes you use from other tonalities, the more "outside" the sound.

Hands on. Let's try this technique over an *E7#9*, as in **Ex. 1**, where we launch the same rhythmic and intervallic pattern from each chord tone. Notice how we always wind up a fourth higher than our starting note.

Play **Ex. 2** over *Gm7*. This pattern ends up a fifth above each chord tone and takes us well beyond the blues box.

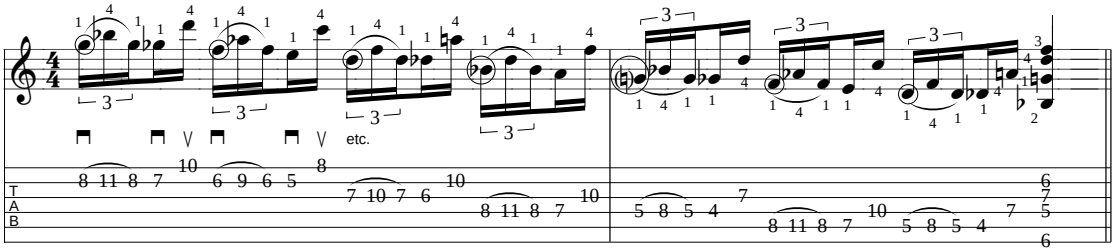
Ex. 3 illustrates what happens when you

Ex. 1 E7#9

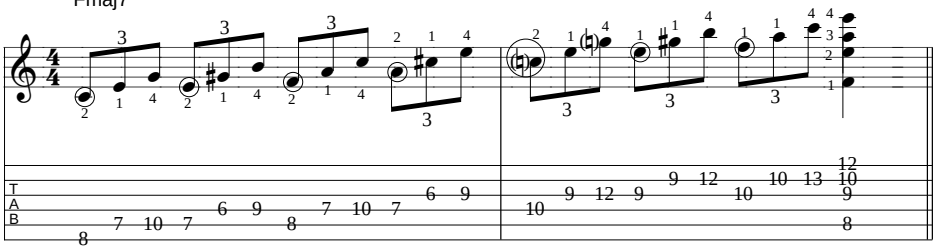


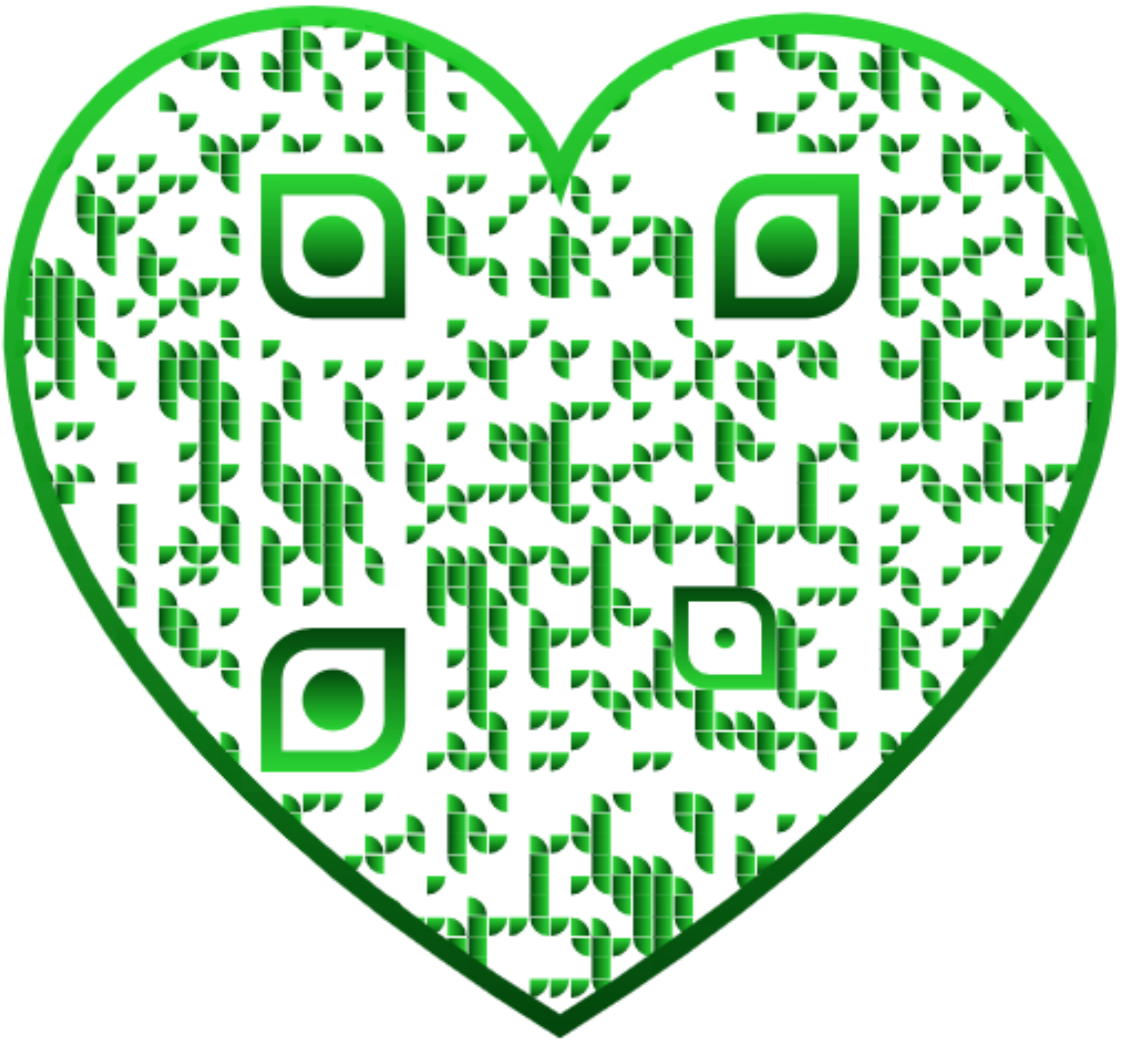
circled notes = target chord tones

Ex. 2 Gm7



Ex. 3 Fmaj7





launch a major triad shape from each *Fmaj7* chord tone. Not the stereotypical arpeggiated maj7 sound!

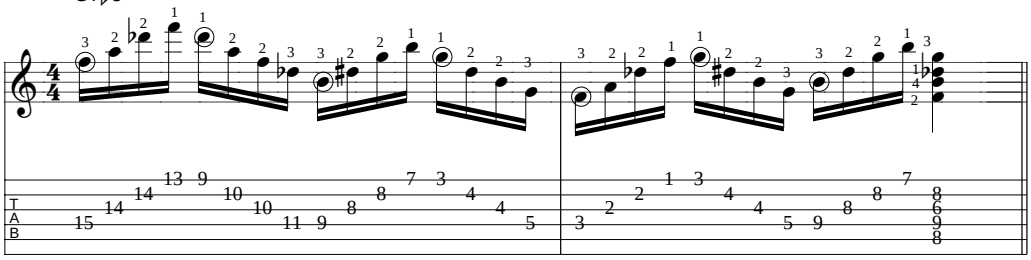
In **Ex. 4**, we start an augmented chord shape from *G7♭5* chord tones, and alternate ascending and descending patterns. Even though we're thinking in terms of a dominant 7♭5, this example also produces the ♯5 tension.

Ex. 5 encircles *Am7* chord tones in an ear-tweaking way.

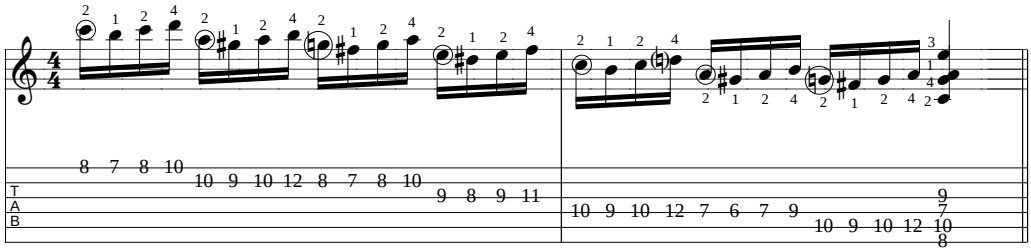
Finally, be sparing with techniques that generate outside sounds. Remember to play such ideas with confidence and authority so your dissonances don't simply sound like mistakes.

Jody Fisher is an associate director for the National Guitar Workshop's California and Nashville campuses. His *Thirty-Day Workout for Guitarists* is published by Alfred. For info on Fisher's CD *Old Songs, New Licks*, write to Ear Fruit, Box 1602, Redlands, CA 92373.

Ex. 4 G7♭5



Ex. 5 Am7

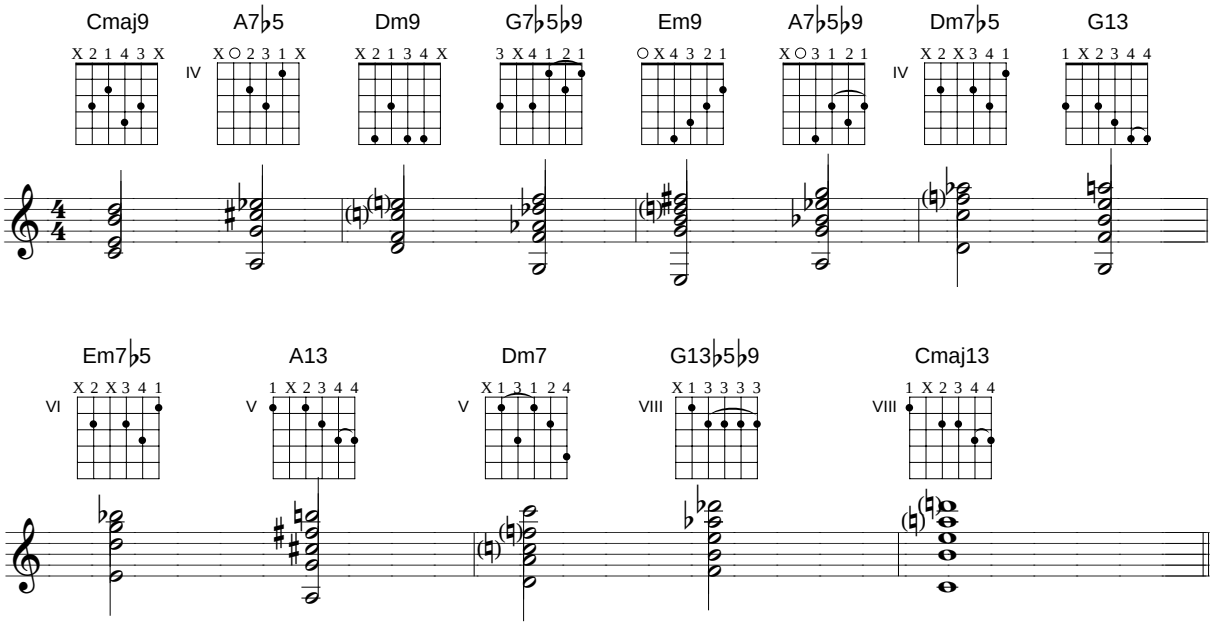


Lenny Breau's Comping Workout

IN MAY '84, MASTER fingerstylist Lenny Breau offered this insight into his harmonic wizardry: "The more command you have over chord voicings and their inversions, the more you'll be able to implement your musical ideas in situations ranging from spontaneous comping to meticulous arranging. This exercise is designed to help you gain better control of the voicings you already know."

The chord sequence is based on I-VI-II-V root motion, a very common progression in jazz and pop. Each chord is modified to accommodate the melody line—an ascending chromatic scale, starting on *D*. "To get the most out of this exercise, you should begin on other scale tones as well," suggested Breau. "Depending on which note you start with, some of the resulting chords may sound dissonant—*F*, for instance, as the upper voice of *Cmaj7*. Keep the melody chromatic, and simply alter the harmony as needed to make the sequence flow more smoothly."

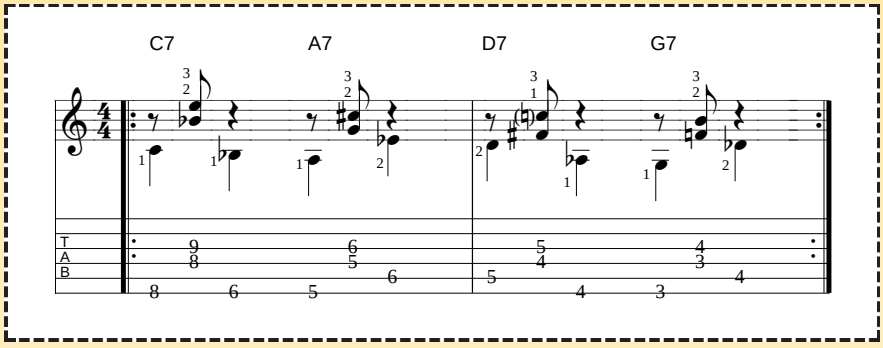
For instance, if you prefer to avoid such unsettling chords as *Cmaj7* with *G♯* in the melody, simply change the harmony to *E7*. Just keep in mind that in doing so, you've changed the progression from I-VI-II-V to III-VI-II-V.



Lick of the Month

FOUR ON THE FLOOR

CHARLES CHAPMAN, AN ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR at Berklee's guitar department, is our October Lickster. "If you need a hip turnaround for a swing tune or shuffle blues, this lick will do it every time. My students find it useful, no matter what style they play. Play with a swing feel, and keep the four-on-the-floor bass nice and steady."



Send us your candidate for Lick of the Month (preferably notated *and* on cassette), along with a brief explanation of why it's cool and how to play it. If we select your offering, you'll get a funky custom T-shirt that's available *only* to Lick of the Month club members. Mail your entry to Lick of the Month, *Guitar Player*, 411 Borel Ave. #100, San Mateo, CA 94402. Include your name, address, and phone number. Materials won't be returned, and please don't call the office to check the status of your submission. You'll get your shirt if your lick is chosen.

LAPTOP GUITAR

A Trip to Hawaii

BY STACY PHILLIPS

STEEL GUITAR PLAYS A PROMINENT role in country and bluegrass, but it was originally called Hawaiian guitar, in honor of its birthplace. The technique of using a piece of metal to fret a guitar was solidified (and perhaps invented) by native Hawaiian Joseph Kekuku in the last decade of the nineteenth century. Here is a short list of moves identified with the original slide sound from the "Land of the Hula." All examples use high open-*G* tuning (*G*, *B*, *D*, *G*, *B*, *D*), and are intended for lapstyle guitar.

Hula picks. One signature bit of phrasing is called the *hula pick*. This involves approaching a melody note by first playing a staccato note of lower pitch—typically located a sixth or third below. The hula pick usually occurs on a different string from the melody note, but you can use the open first string if it fits in the key. The result resembles the voice break of a yodel.

In **Ex. 1**, the first three notes played on the third string are hula picks. The melodic moves in this line are prototypically Hawaiian. A slow, wide vibrato is a must.

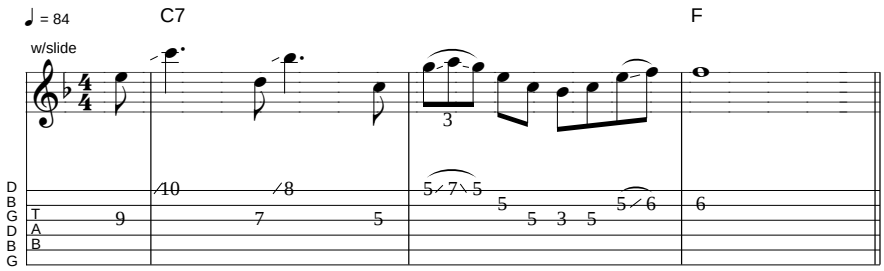
Hawaiian hiccups. On uptempo tunes, steelers often transform the open-string hula picks into series of very staccato notes that serve as rhythmic interjections in the melody. When they are fast and short enough, they become Hawaiian hiccups, as illustrated in **Ex. 2**. This is an excerpt from a hula number called "Tomi Tomi," and is based on the playing of the first steel-guitar superstar, Sol Hoopii, who rose to prominence in the late '20s.

Crying and sliding. A right-hand effect that became synonymous with Hawaiian music is the steel guitar's version of tremolo. This involves quickly alternating notes on two (usually adjacent) strings. This alternation usually has a triplet rhythm, but the rate can vary. When you add a dollop of lazy, wide vibrato, and let each pair of strings ring together, the individual pitches become murky and morph into a crying, warbling sound. As you try **Ex. 3**, sync your vibrato to your picking: Slide up when you pick the higher string and down when you pluck the lower string. This is hot stuff in some circles.

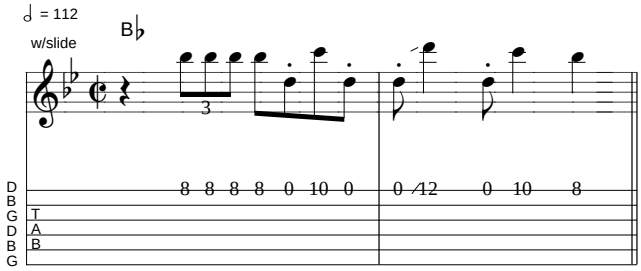
The amen turnaround. Another Hawaiian music trademark is a one- or two-measure turnaround that's tacked to the end of an eight- or 16-measure stanza. These turnarounds are similar to the "amen" response of a church congregation, and usually involve a I-V-I or V7-I cadence. **Ex. 4** shows the latter.

Stacy Phillips is the author of *The Art of Hawaiian Steel Guitar* and *The Complete Dobro Player* (both distributed by Mel Bay). His most recent album, *Stacy Phillips/Paul Howard* [Malahat Mountain] is a duet with vocalist/guitarist Howard.

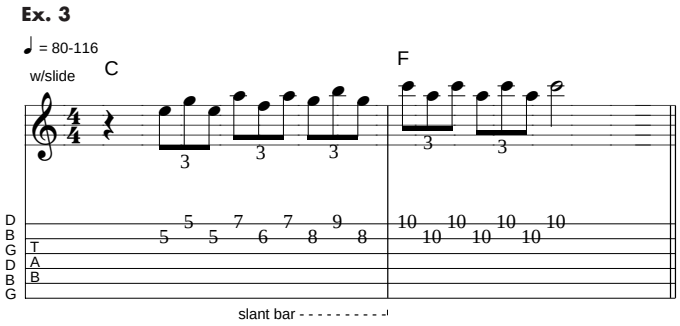
Ex. 1



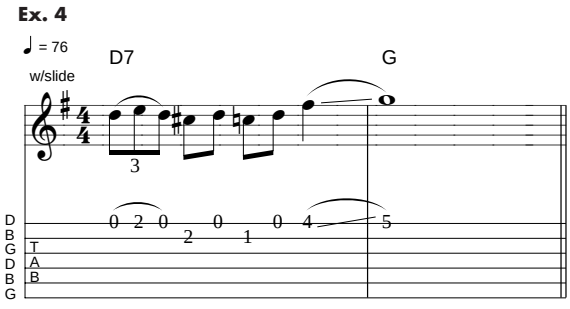
Ex. 2



Ex. 3



Ex. 4



Upper-Register Chords

BY PINO MARRONE

WHEN COMPING IN A MODERN jazz setting, it's important to create color and contrast. One way to accomplish this is to change registers. Typically, the guitar's low and mid registers are where most of the action takes place. While used by pianists, the high register is often neglected by guitarists. For some it's a bit uncomfortable to reach voicings above the 12th fret, while others can't seem to find rich-sounding voicings way up there.

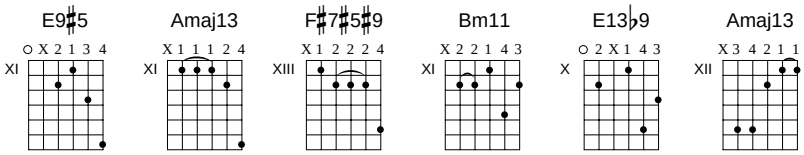
Ex. 1 contains beautiful upper-register voicings. Play through them slowly, and try singing the roots to help focus your ears on their sound. Take your time.

Ex. 2 illustrates how you can use these chords in a standard progression. Practice with a metronome clicking on beats two and four at around 85 bpm. Go for rhythmic sparseness and space, and try playing these voicings with a bass player.

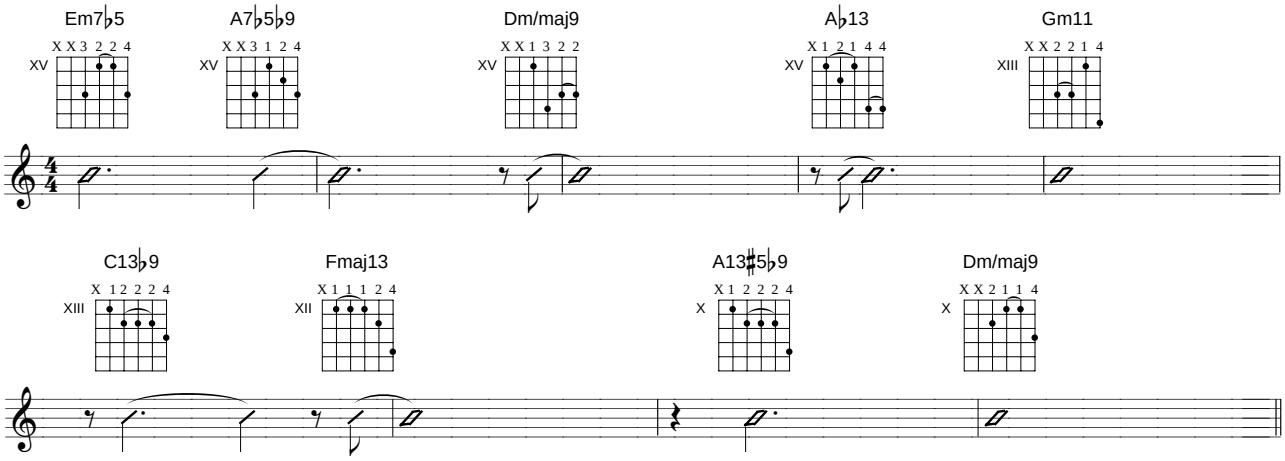
Suggested listening. To get a feel for this approach, listen to anything by Canadian guitarist Ed Bickert with saxophonist Paul Desmond, as well as any music by guitar genius Ted Greene. Also check out how pianist Bill Evans comped behind the bass solo on "Beautiful Love" on his album *Explorations*. This magic cut really illustrates the point.

A Ted Greene alumnus, Pino Marrone has also studied and performed extensively with Joe Diorio. A former instructor at G.I.T. and Grove School of Music, Marrone has played and recorded with Joe Farrell, Alphonso Johnson, Kenny Kirkland, Dianne Reeves, Abraham Laboriel, and Herb Alpert.

Ex. 1

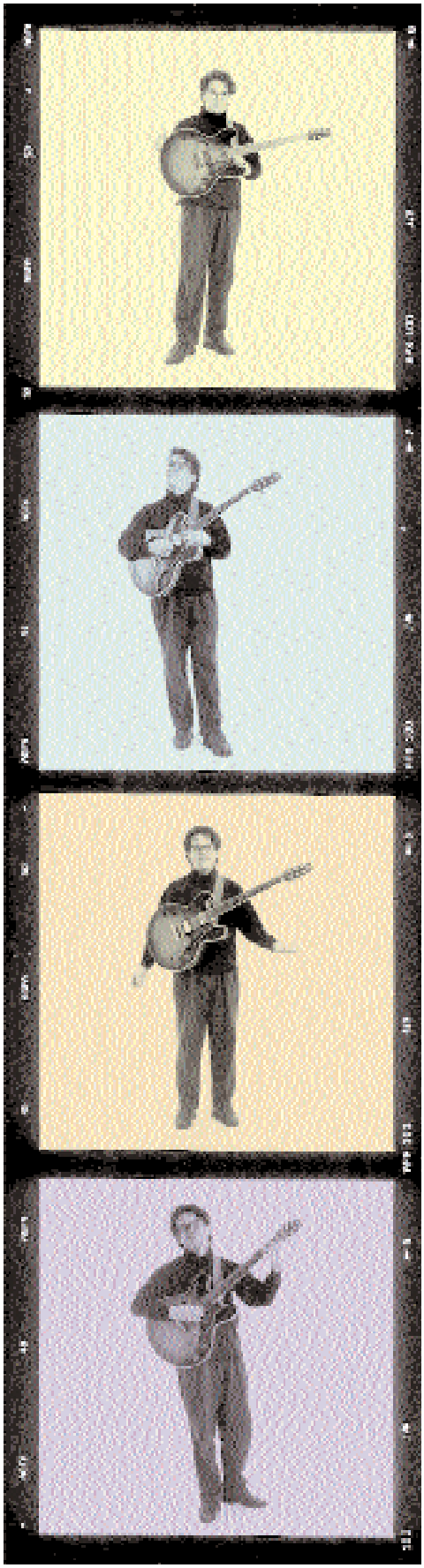


Ex. 2



SESSIONS

The Fingertip String Quartet



BY MORRIS ACEVEDO

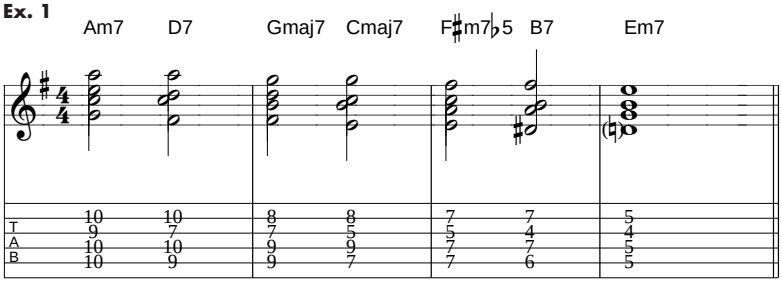
THE SECRET TO PLAYING SMOOTH chord changes lies in voice-leading. Simply put, this means paying attention to how each note in a chord moves to the next chord's notes. To get a feel for voice-leading, let's try several variations on the same progression: *Am7-D7-Gmaj7-Cmaj7-F♯m7♭5-B7-Em7*.

Notice how **Examples 1** and **2** stay on the inside four strings, while **Examples 3** and **4** descend and ascend on a split string set: six, four, three, and two. By using inversions, we can creep along on the same string set throughout an example.

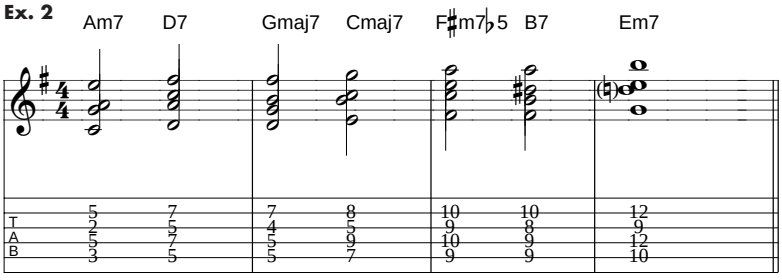
As you move from chord to chord, imagine each string is a separate instrument or voice. Listen for common tones and stepwise (half- or whole-step) motion within each line. Now try to hear the progression as a set of four independent lines moving up or down the fretboard. Hey—you have a string quartet at your fingertips!

Once you've played these examples, transpose the progression to different keys.

Ex. 1



Ex. 2



Finally, try voice-leading other common progressions—Imaj7-VIm7-IIm7-V7, for instance, or a backcycled series of IIm7-V7-Imaj7 cadences. Some pointers:

• Be careful how you use major 7th chords in the 3rd inversion, such as Ex. 1's *Gmaj7*. In some contexts, this voicing sounds too dissonant; in other situations, it's totally cool.

• Stay on one string set for the entire progression. Doing so will force you to hunt for new voicings—that's good.

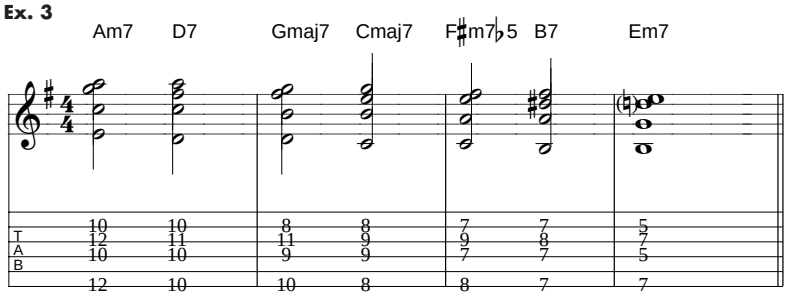
• Use the lowest note in each chord as your focus point.

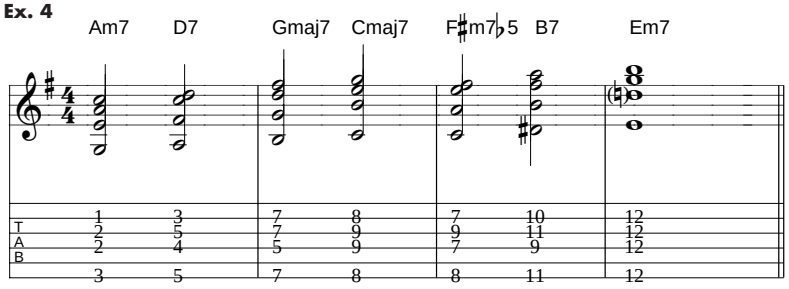
• Keep traveling in one direction along the fretboard, until you run out of room, or your ear tells you it's time to change direction.

• Wherever possible, build each line from common tones and stepwise motion.

Once you've explored the single-string-set concept, experiment with changing string sets in the middle of the progression, and try voice-leading the changes to your favorite tunes. Skillful use of inversions and voice leading makes for colorful comping.

North Texas State and Berklee alum Morris Acevedo lectures on jazz improv at U.C. Berkeley, directs the Berkeley Jazz Guitar Ensemble, and teaches at the Blue Bear School of American Music in San Francisco.

Ex. 3

Ex. 4



SESSIONS

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1665 - **Go Outside from Within,** BY JODY FISHER

1666 - **Comping Workout,** BY LENNY BREAU

1667 - **A Trip to Hawaii,** BY STACY PHILLIPS

1668 - **Upper-Register Chords,** BY PINO MARRONE

1669 - **The Fingertip String Quartet,** BY MORRIS ACEVEDO

1670 - **Lick of the Month:** FOUR ON THE FLOOR

1671 - **7-String lesson,** BY JOE GORE

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